Issues and Possibilities of Museum Exhibits of Earthquake Disaster Resources: Research to Build a Universal Mission for Disaster Resource Exhibit Facilities and its Significance

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Currently, in Japan, there is a trend of frequent large-scale natural disasters due to great earthquakes, large tsunamis, great typhoons, low atmospheric pressure, and other causes, and there is an increased social need for resource exhibit facilities to document the disaster and pass on the memory. However, a basic philosophy in establishing such facilities and a basic methodology of exhibit design have not been set, and established facilities have many problems in operation management and exhibit design. Further, additional facilities are being established without concrete attempts to resolve the situation.

This paper examines disaster resource exhibit facilities of earthquakes and other disasters and points out problems in the establishment phase and operation management of the facility and problems and issues in exhibit design. Additionally, it presents the case of Rias Ark Museum of Art’s permanent exhibition Documentary of East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and History of Tsunami Disaster as an attempt at a solution, outlining the sequence of events leading up to its establishment and indicating the exhibition techniques used in this exhibition. Finally, this paper attempts to redefine the significance of the existence of disaster resource exhibit facilities and the necessity of establishing them, from a unique perspective based on the results arising from this exhibit.

“How will the universal mission be set for establishing disaster resource exhibits and disaster resource-related museums and managing their operation? How should humans go on to face works and phenomena of nature beyond human understanding?” Finding the answers to these questions is the ultimate goal to be attained by this paper, and it could be said that the answer arrived at is a philosophy which should be used as a base for debating this theme. At the Rias Ark Museum of Art, the answers to these questions are being made manifest through the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster as it is studied and explored, continued to be recorded and investigated, and the results are exhibited and made public. This paper presents that philosophy as one case and attempts to indicate a path to optimize the social function of new disaster resource exhibits to be established in the future by disseminating it to existing museums or researchers such as museum curators.

Key words: the Rias Ark Museum of Art, disaster resource exhibits, imagination, natural environment, disaster mitigation